

**REMARKS**

The present invention relates to a production method of a dehydration reaction product.

In the Summary of the Office Action of December 15, 2004, claims 1, 3-6, 9, 13, 14, 18, and 19 were indicated as allowed. Claims 11, 12, and 16 were objected to. Lastly, claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 based on the Hirata et al '495 reference. At pages 2-3 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated issues under 35 U.S.C. § 112 with respect to claims 1, 3, 10, 13, and 16.

In order to best assure that the responses made would resolve the remaining issues and place the application in condition for allowance, an Interview was requested. The Examiner was kind enough to grant an Interview, which was conducted with the Attorney identified below on February 25, 2005. Applicants express their appreciation to the Examiner. The Examiner issued an Interview Summary at the conclusion of the Interview. Furthermore a Statement Of The Substance Of The Interview is filed simultaneously herewith regarding the matters discussed at the Interview.

Turning to the Office Action, first, with respect to claim 1, a question was raised as to failure to recite the disclosed apparatus and whether there might be a failure to claim what Applicants regard as the invention.

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In response, as was noted at the Interview, claim 1 is directed to a method, not to an apparatus, and claim 1 is in fact directed to what Applicants do regard as their invention.

With respect to claim 3, the Examiner explained at the Interview his position that claim 3 failed to further limit claim 1 since all pipes would have a gradient, whether that be positive, negative, or zero (0).

Claim 3 has been amended herein to limit claim 3 to the preferred embodiment of a positive gradient ( $\theta$ ) (see paragraph bridging pages 20-21, first full paragraph at page 21, and Fig. 1, etc.).

With respect to claims 10 and 13, the Examiner raised a question with respect to the recited value of “n” from 0 to 300.

Applicants respectfully submit that the value range recited for n in claims 10 and 13 is clear and definite as to the range of oxyalkylene groups that may be present. Further in this regard, at the Interview, the Examiner’s attention was directed to the disclosure of the Hirata et al ‘495 reference, with respect to which n was defined as a number in a range of 1 to 300, and such recitation was clearly concluded to comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112. Accordingly, it is again respectfully submitted that the recited range of n in present claims 10 and 13 fully complies with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

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With respect to claim 16, a question was raised as to how the dehydration reaction product is used as a starting material for a production of polymer, and at the Interview, the Examiner suggested some further recitation to clarify regarding the mixing of the materials to carry out the process.

In response, multiply dependent claim 16 has been amended herein to indicate the mixing of the dehydration reaction product with the other materials (as recited in the claims on which claim 16 depends) to produce a polymer for cement additive. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended claim 16 complies with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 have been overcome.

Turning to the rejection of claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, in the discussion at the Interview, reference was made to the drawings, including Figure 10 in the disclosure of the specification, based on which the Examiner suggested clarifying the recitation of claim 10 to more clearly distinguish over the Hirata et al '495 reference.

Accordingly, claim 10 has been amended herein to more clearly indicate the relationship of the feeding pipe to the water separator, and the feature of the feeding pipe as having openings in the gaseous phase section and in the liquid phase section of the water separator. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 has been overcome.

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In addition to the foregoing, claims 11 and 12 have been cancelled, and new claims 20-22 have been added to the application.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of claims 1, 3-6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, and 18-22 are now in condition for immediate allowance.

Early favorable action is earnestly solicited.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

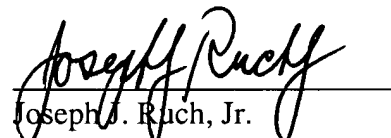
Respectfully submitted,

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**23373**

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